

CHILD LIFE



For my little daughter

Margaret Weston Draper -

from her Father - April - 1891 -



CHILD · LIFE A · SOUVENIR · OF LIZBETH · B · HUMPHREY

A Collection of her most Popular Designs, with a Biographical Sketch by
MARY · J · JACQUES



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Among the gracious images that have come to give warmth and brightness to the season of Peace and Good-Will in the last ten years, none have been more welcome than the bewitching little people that have made the monogram above a symbol of all that is picturesque and winning in childhood. Other delightful bits of nature, in flowers, figures and landscape, we owe to the same light touch and the same pure eyes, but the tender favorites of the artist's own heart go straight to the hearts of all lovers of children. So it must be that many who have never felt the direct influence of that rare personality, of which this genial and charming work was only one expression, would gladly learn something of a life as sunny and sweet as the greetings of these gentle messengers.

ELIZABETH BULLOCK HUMPHREY, daughter of WILLIAM HENRY and ALMIRA BROWN HUMPHREY, was born at Millbury, Mass., May 13, 1841. The early death of four children born to Mr. and Mrs. Humphrey left in their hearts a yearning void, which this fair-haired little maiden came to fill with a measure of delight and comfort that grew ever fuller and richer down to the declining years which her filial devotion soothed and blessed.

Lizzie's parents were early identified with those movements that had for their object a realization of the brotherhood of man and the freedom of human souls; and when fidelity to his conception of these aims involved a sacrifice of material prosperity, her father simply bore his testimony to the truth, as a matter of course.

One quaint incident of her early childhood shows what was already her outlook upon life and destiny. During a visit at a distance from home she listened to a presentation of the Divine attributes, in which sovereign wrath quite obscured the Love that she knew. When the pressure upon her soft heart became intolerable, she suddenly interrupted the discussion by exclaiming: "We have a gooder God than *that* at Millbury!"

In 1849 Mr. Humphrey removed to Hopedale, Mass., which was thenceforth the home of the family. To a community that had for its ideal the practical expression of Fraternity in village life and the advocacy of Peace and of Equal Rights, these sincere and earnest souls were a welcome addition. As acquaintance grew to familiarity and the society was expanded and modified, the Humphrey homestead became an embodiment of that active spirit of hospitality and kindness which its occupants never failed to manifest.

Lizzie found a warm place in the hearts of her new playmates, which she held with the serene unconsciousness of self that was characteristic of her happy organization. She could make the prettiest May baskets and she was the sweetest May Queen, her companions thought, and the only indication she ever gave of being spoiled by this partiality was a delicious assumption of dignity on the first occasion of a failure to be elected May Queen. "If they ask me again," she announced, "I shall positively *recline*." This little bit of naughtiness she was wont to relate with a relish that her keen sense of humor gave to every subject of innocent mirth, but not from her did we learn that she once besought her teacher's influence that a schoolmate should be chosen May Queen in her place. "It would make her friend so happy," she urged.

Full of life and suggestion, she became the acknowledged leader in many plans for pleasure and improvement. One of her earliest experiments in art (at the age of ten) was the projection and painting of a panorama representing scenes from a favorite story book. Her young assistants in this task soon showed an artless appreciation of composition and values by leaving the whole series of pictures in her hands for completion, though

the aid of a boyish pencil was sometimes invoked for "an animal or a ship." The inspiration of the work was a desire to entertain the village children, and this faculty of giving pleasure in simple and graceful ways adorned her whole life and enriched the lives of those who were in any way associated with her.

Her aptness and fidelity in the work of school life, and bright participation in all its festivals and merry-makings invest the memory of her girlhood with peculiar charms. Then, as in womanhood, that "bond of perfectness," her unfailing charity, was rendered only more lovable by the grand flush of indignation that baseness or injustice could elicit from her, upon occasion.

When her time came to decide what she would do with a life that she was resolved should be lived to some purpose, a natural facility with the pencil, which had received encouragement and direction during the whole course of her education, gave a rational basis to her choice of Art as her vocation. Not then, as now, were opportunities of instruction and practice afforded on every side to aspiring limners, but she bravely turned every available help to good account. A course of study at Cooper Institute, New York, brought her into inspiring and enduring relations with sister artists, one of whom thus writes of her: "The impression which her nature made upon all of us remains in my mind like the memory of some particular day when the sky was very blue above a sunny hilltop."

It was at this period that Miss Humphrey determined to direct her future efforts mainly to designs for illustration. Establishing herself in Boston, she found in this congenial employment room for the exercise of talents that soon won her a popular recognition; but it was in a different field, to which reference has already been made, that her supreme success was achieved and her own ideal more nearly attained.

"Perhaps no better sample of her work could be cited than the little umbrella-covered figure of winter, or the sweet, shy representative of summer from the calendar of 1889. In execution they have the direct sim-

plicity of a Japanese sketch, the naïveté of the children on a French dinner card, and withal the moral appeal of unsullied youth which Miss Alcott portrays. The mechanism is all forgotten and we are ennobled and cheered at the sight of them."

The award to Miss Humphrey of the Second and Third prizes by the Artist vote, at the exhibition of Christmas card designs held in New York in 1881, and the large popular vote for the Boston Card three years later, gave a happy impulse to this new departure. Fruitful years followed. Refreshed by travel in her own country and broadened by intercourse with various minds attracted by her noble and endearing qualities, she became more and more "the light of the eyes" to those who knew her best, and who knew not how to conceive of life without her.

Dowered with fine health, she had ever evinced a singularly delicate appreciation of the burdens of pain and weakness, and when the doubly heavy cross was laid upon her unaccustomed shoulders, she bore it with sweet courage and hopefulness to the end.

A journey to a milder climate, undertaken late in the winter of 1889, proved unavailing to arrest the progress of her decline, and on the Third of April, at Hamilton, Bermuda, she breathed her last.

At Hopedale, one week later, she was tenderly and beautifully laid to rest beside her father and mother—at home forever.

"Though gone from our ranks, her presence will long live with many of us, the slim figure in brown, the crown of abundant yellow hair, the fine, magnetic hands, the delicate, musical voice and 'the face that was a benediction!'"

M. J. J.





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THE
RED LETTER DAYS



